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*City Document. — No. 101.*

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# CITY OF BOSTON.

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## REPORT

ON A

## SITE FOR AN INSANE ASYLUM.

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*In Common Council, October 28, 1869.*

Laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

Attest:

W. P. GREGG,

*Clerk of the Common Council.*



# REPORT

## SITE FOR AN INSANE ASYLUM.

MAY 4 1962

## CITY OF BOSTON.

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*In Common Council, October 28, 1869.*

THE Joint Standing Committee on Public Institutions, who were requested to take such steps as they might deem necessary to ascertain whether a more eligible location can be obtained than the one heretofore appropriated in Winthrop, on which to erect a new hospital for the insane, beg leave to submit the following

### REPORT :

In accordance with the request of the City Council, the committee advertised for proposals for a site suitable for such an institution, and received quite a number of propositions to sell land, in large and small quantities, in Boston and the immediate vicinity. Several of the localities offered were visited and carefully examined; but the consideration of the committee was finally confined to two localities, as possessing advantages for such a purpose superior to any of the others.

The "Codman estate," so-called, lying between Washington Street and Forest Hill Avenue, in Dorchester, contains with the "Mansion House Lot," about sixty-one acres. The distance from City Hall is about five and a half miles. The situation of this estate, both as regards its surroundings, and the means of access to it from the central portion of the city, is quite all that could be desired. The "Mansion House Lot," containing about six and a half acres, is under a high state of cultivation. The



buildings on it consist of a mansion house in good repair, a barn, and a summer house. There are a large number of magnificent shade trees of various kinds, a fine orchard, a garden, and a lawn. From several positions on the estate views are obtained of the harbor, the Blue Hills, and the finest portions of the country in the vicinity of Boston.

The estate owned by the heirs of John Codman covers an area of about fifty-four acres. It is offered to the city for the average price of fourteen hundred dollars per acre. The "Mansion House Lot," with all the buildings and other fixtures thereon, is offered for the round sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, — making the total cost, of about sixty-one acres, one hundred thousand dollars.

Breed's Island, containing about five hundred and six acres of upland and meadow, and two hundred and twenty-seven acres of flats, situated between East Boston and Winthrop, and within the present limits of the city, is offered for \$250,000. The distance from City Hall is about three miles.

The representative of the owners, in his communication to the committee, states that "it is easily accessible both by land and by water; but is, nevertheless, completely isolated, and secured forever from the intrusion of habitations or business, which is an advantage that no other site within the city limits can boast. It has a pleasingly diversified surface, rising at one point into a lofty eminence, from which is visible a superb view of the surrounding country and harbor. Its air is salubrious; its soil is fertile; and its abundant crops and extensive growth of fruit and shade trees demonstrate its adaptedness to remunerative cultivation. There is upon the island a gravel bank of superior quality, containing at least one hundred and twenty-five thousand squares. It is easily accessible, and its removal will not affect in any way the site of the Lunatic Hospital, or impair the value of the property for the use to which the city would put it. I understand that this gravel is now taken by the city at a cost

of one dollar and twenty-five cents per square, which would make it worth, at least, \$156,250, thus reducing the cost to \$93,750,— say \$185.00 per acre for meadow and upland.”

The committee are divided in opinion as to the expediency of purchasing the Codman estate, or Breed’s Island, or retaining the present location in Winthrop.

A portion of the committee are in favor of the Codman estate, as being, in all respects, the most suitable location. The first cost of this property is apparently large; but they believe that when the desirableness of the location, and the present condition of the land, which will require but a small outlay to make it suitable for the purposes of such an institution, are considered, it will appear as the most economical investment for the city.

In regard to the very great, and increasing necessity for a new Hospital for the Insane, the committee are unanimous; and they believe that the necessity is so fully understood and appreciated by the members of the City Council that it is unnecessary to add anything upon that part of the subject here.

The members of the committee in favor of the purchase of the Codman estate would respectfully recommend the passage of the accompanying orders.

For the Committee.

BENJ. JAMES,

*Chairman.*

*Ordered,* That the Joint Standing Committee on Public Institutions be, and they are hereby, authorized to purchase the estates owned by Charlotte R. Cochrane, and the heirs of John Codman, in Dorchester, containing sixty-one acres, more or less, and also the buildings and other fixtures thereon, for a sum not

exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, — said land and buildings to be used for the purposes of a hospital for the insane.

*Ordered,* That the Treasurer be authorized to borrow, under the direction of the Committee on Finance, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, to be applied to the purchase of a site for an insane asylum in Dorchester.





